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TAGS: [NATO](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [RS](#) [BU](#) [GG](#) [RO](#) [TU](#) [AR](#) [AJ](#)
SUBJECT: BLACK SEA SECURITY AND TURKISH REPRESENTATION AT
THE BLACK SEA FORUM

REF: A. STATE 79658
[1](#)B. ANKARA 3034

Classified By: PolMil Counselor Timothy A Betts for reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Turkey has actively participated in preparations for the Black Sea Forum and will be represented at the Forum at the cabinet level. MFA expects the only heads of state to attend besides Romania to be those from the south Caucasus. Ankara is concerned that the Forum not create an umbrella for or conflict with the work of other regional cooperation mechanisms, particularly the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) organization. It also remains concerned about keeping Russia engaged in Black Sea security cooperation initiatives. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) We raised Black Sea security issues with MFA Multilateral Economic Affairs Deputy Director General A. Asim Arar on May 30. Arar, who is responsible for BSEC and whose office is taking the lead on Turkey's participation at Romania's Black Sea Forum, informed us that Minister of State for International Cooperation Besir Atalay will lead Turkey's delegation to the Forum. Ankara has been active in the preparatory meetings for the Forum and helped shape the final declaration to address what the GOT understands to be Romania's objectives for the gathering. Turkey did so with the understanding that the Forum would neither create an umbrella for nor duplicate any existing regional cooperative mechanisms.

[1](#)3. (C) Arar briefly reviewed MFA's understanding of how other participants were approaching the forum:

-- Russia is not taking the Forum seriously, deliberately distancing itself from the preparatory work. Arar thought that Moscow may be regretting this decision now that the Forum appears likely to occur. Russia will be represented at the Forum by its ambassador in Bucharest.

-- Greece is not happy with the Forum and its reaching out to the EU as the GOG perceives Romania trying to supplant Athens' role as the link between the Black Sea/BSEC and the EU. Greece will send a minister to the Forum

-- Bulgaria was supportive of the Forum at first, but has

come to share Turkey's concerns about the dangers of duplicating existing structures and how Forum decisions might be implemented. Sofia will be represented by a minister

-- The presidents of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan will participate in the Forum.

¶4. (C) Arar stressed the GOT concern to not duplicate, dilute, or conflict with BSEC work. While admitting that BSEC was still maturing and lacking in concrete results, he asserted that it was nonetheless a functioning organization. Arar stated that the GOT was planning a "focused and realistically achievable agenda" for its six-month chairmanship of BSEC starting May 1, 2007. He noted that BSEC was trying to do too many things; for example, the current Russian Chair paper was too long and ambitious. Arar advocated choosing one thing - like implementing a preferential trade agreement. He admitted that there could be more business participation in BSEC, noting that Turkey was represented in the BSEC Business Council by the umbrella business organization DEIK. Arar said the centerpiece of the Turkish chairmanship would be the June 27, 2007 BSEC Summit in Istanbul. He voiced concern that if new initiatives arose out of the Forum, they might distract participants from efforts to ensure measures undertaken by BSEC succeeded.

¶5. (C) On more general Black Sea security issues, Arar reiterated the GOT position about the importance of keeping Russia engaged in regional cooperative arrangements. Black Sea security cannot be maintained without Moscow's participation, he said. We responded that while we appreciate Russia's importance to the region, we did not believe it should have a veto over the actions of the other littorals or US involvement in the region.

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